

Title II Evaluation Scopes of Work

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The overall goal of all Title II non-emergency Development Assistance Programs (DAPs) is to improve food security. Program implementers, or Cooperating Sponsors (CSs), are required to monitor and evaluate progress toward this aim. This technical note was developed to assist CSs in constructing a scope of work for an evaluation.

There is no single correct way to construct a Scope of Work (SOW). In fact, the format and content of SOWs should vary in accordance with DAP designs and evaluation objectives. Nonetheless, all SOWs need to answer, at a minimum, why the evaluation is taking place, what it will cover, who will carry out the evaluation, and when it will be executed. This technical note provides standard, but not mandatory, items to include in the SOW for Title II mid-term (process) and final (impact) evaluations.

To ensure that the evaluation report contains the type and quality of information that is useful to managers and other program implementers, the SOW should provide adequate guidance to the evaluation team. Taking the time to clearly state the objectives and identify particular questions to be addressed provides an opportunity to think through what type of output is desired and communicate that expectation clearly to the team. This also ensures that the field staff manages and participates in the process.

¹ Technical sectors I and II refer to the different technical or sectoral components of the DAP being evaluated and could include agriculture, health and nutrition, education, rural roads, water and sanitation, microenterprise, microfinance, etc. The number and content of the sectoral SOWs correspond to the design of the DAP.

Key differences between mid-term (process) and final (impact) evaluations

Title II mid-term and final evaluations are similar and, for this reason, they are discussed together. However, there are some important differences between the two evaluations. Mid-term evaluations assess progress toward meeting program objectives. It is an opportunity to evaluate what the DAP intends to accomplish versus what is actually being accomplished. The aim is to identify problems and constraints and to work with local staff to develop actionable recommendations to improve the design and implementation of the program. Mid-terms are important to adjust targets as well as inform the direction of the program. For this reason, there tends to be significant CS staff participation in the mid-term evaluation.

Final evaluations ask many of the same questions, but there are three key differences. First, there is less emphasis on finding solutions to implementation problems and more on results achieved and lessons learned for future programming. The final is more reflective. In reality, this distinction is muted by the fact that many CSs plan follow-on DAPs in the same areas, and the final evaluation is often used as a tool to strengthen the design and implementation of the follow-on activities. Also, lessons learned can be applied to other DAPs and used for future planning. Second, the Office of Food For Peace requires that there be greater reliance on external evaluators and more emphasis on objectivity. Third, the final evaluation is focused on population-level impacts, establishing plausible links between inputs and impacts, whereas the mid-term is oriented toward effects on participant households. The information presented in this brief refers to the mid-term evaluation with any important distinctions between the two types of evaluations, and expected adjustments to the SOW, noted where necessary.

Outline of the scope of work

1. Introduction
2. Composition of the team
3. Team and individual team member SOWs
 - 3.1. SOW for the overall team
 - 3.2. SOW for technical sector I and corresponding team member ¹
 - 3.3. SOW for technical sector II and corresponding team member
4. Description of the deliverable
5. Time frame

Each outline section is discussed below under the corresponding section heading.

Contents of the scope of work

I. Introduction:

The introduction should provide a brief orientation to the program and give the team members an idea of the type of program interventions they will be evaluating and the environment in which they will be working. The introduction should include the following information:

1. Objective of the evaluation
2. Description of the program
 - 2.1. Goal of the program, including strategic objectives and intermediate results
 - 2.2. A brief description of key interventions and implementation strategies
 - 2.3. Geographic coverage of the program
 - 2.4. Description of key partners and how activities are coordinated
 - 2.5. Implementation history and issues to date, which may include:
 - delays in implementing specific interventions;
 - changes in target populations;
 - changes in the design of key interventions; or
 - issues related to the operating environment (political, institutional, climatic, economic, etc).
3. Brief description of how the program fits into the mission and local government's strategies and priorities.

The purpose of the mid-term and final evaluation is similar, with the distinction being the relative importance of program implementation versus program results.

Mid-term: evaluates how the DAP is being implemented in order to identify where and how implementation can be improved.

Final: evaluates what the accomplishments of the DAP have been in terms of its impact on the well being of the target population.

The indicator performance tracking table (IPTT) can be included in the background section along with the strategic objectives and intermediate results. It can also be included as an annex to the SOW.

The content of the introduction section should be restricted to providing background information and should not include questions or issues to be addressed by the evaluation team. These should be included in the SOW sections that are discussed in more detail below.

2. Composition of the team:

It is important to be explicit about the number and qualifications of team members. The composition of the team will depend on the project technical components as well as the type of questions to be answered through the evaluation. The number of team members will depend on the need for specific technical expertise. Multi-sectoral DAPs are technically more diverse than single sector DAPs, and thus are likely to require a larger, technically more diverse team.

Always designate one person as the team leader, keeping in mind that while this person can also cover one of the technical areas, s/he needs to be given sufficient time to attend to the responsibilities of the team leader (e.g., working with the CS on logistics, insuring that all team members fulfill their obligations, organizing and directing team interaction, planning a final in-country workshop or meeting, etc.). The individual who fills this position should possess strong management skills. Some evaluations include a large number of cross-cutting issues (e.g., questions concerning overall program administration or how to better integrate the technical components of programs). Although input from technical team members will be required to address these types of issues, the team leader usually articulates the different technical viewpoints and drafts this section of the report. Responsibility for the quality of the final report rests with the team leader as well.

3. Team and individual team member SOWs:

This section of the SOW presents what will become the essential content of the evaluation and the report.

It is important to spend time reflecting on what to include in this section because it guides the team and determines the content of the report. Input from program staff, both technical and managerial, is strongly recommended. This section will likely take the most time to draft.

Usually there is one SOW that is broken down into distinct sections according to technical components such as agriculture, health and nutrition, microenterprise and water and sanitation, with additional sections for management and/or cross-cutting issues. Technical sections are normally assigned to the team member with the corresponding expertise. The other two sections are the responsibility of the team leader. The team leader may wish to distribute the work among the team members, but the decision should be left up to the team leader. A benefit of using one SOW is that it allows all team members to see what is the expected contribution of each team member and how his/her efforts complement those of other team members.

Although the types of questions that are addressed in evaluations are nearly limitless, there are some general questions related to program design, implementation and achievements. In addition to these questions, there are general questions concerning behavior change and adoption, capacity strengthening, sustainability, and monitoring and evaluation that are central to an evaluation of any DAP given the underlying objectives of the Title II program. These questions can be posed

to the entire team, suggesting that only an overview or articulated response is desired, or they can be included in each team member's technical section of the SOW, implying that detailed sector specific observations and recommendations are preferred. Some questions are technical sector specific. For example, growth monitoring is unique to health and nutrition whereas technical specifications are particularly important with construction components, such as rural roads and water and sanitation infrastructure.

If there are additional sector specific implementation and design issues that are relevant to one team member's SOW only, include a small introduction to that section of the SOW. Make certain to keep the background information and discussion separate from the specific evaluation questions in order to maintain clarity.

A sample of general and sector specific questions is provided below. They can be tailored to the specific characteristics or emphases of the DAP. For example, if the focus of the health and nutrition component is nutrition, the SOW may include several questions explicitly addressing diet change and feeding practices in place of a single question about behavior change. This is not an exhaustive list. The questions are provided here as an illustration and should not be interpreted as mandatory for Title II evaluations.

Examples of general evaluation questions:

Design, Implementation and Achievements:

- Are planned activities appropriate for the food security problems identified in the selected target areas? Do the framework, assumptions and design match the local food security conditions?
- Are the selection criteria appropriate for identifying and reaching target communities and households?
- How effective is the program at reaching women? What could be done to improve women's participation?
- What interventions have been more or less successful in meeting targets?
- Which interventions are most critical and/or effective in achieving project objectives and intermediate results?
- What improvements can be made to the design to improve results?
- What improvements can be made in the implementation of the program in order to improve results?
- Are there opportunities for integrating program components that could result in greater food security impacts?
- What are the factors that hinder/assist the effective integration of programs?
- Is the program well integrated in the Mission's strategy? Are there steps that could be taken to improve integration as well as food security impacts through greater integration?
- Is the program well integrated in the local government's strategy and priorities? Are there steps that could be taken to improve the integration as well as food security impacts through greater integration?
- Are there any unexpected but important benefits or impacts of the program that should be documented?
- Are there any negative impacts or unintended consequences of the program that need to be addressed, and how?

Behavior Change:

- Are beneficiaries adopting desired practices or behaviors?
- What is their primary source of information concerning practices and behaviors? What are other key channels of information?
- Which practices have beneficiaries been more inclined to adopt, and why?
- Are there certain groups within the population with lower rates of adoption and why?
- How can the program be modified to address these constraints to adoption?
- Is the beneficiary to extensionist/health volunteer ratio and frequency of contact adequate for the type of behavior change envisioned in the DAP?

Capacity Strengthening:

- Are the training materials appropriate for the participants? Are the training materials state-of-the art? If necessary, how can the materials be improved to better meet the objectives of the training?
- Are the materials consistent with those of the government or other local development agency (including national agricultural research centers)?
- Is the technical field staff well trained and supervised? What areas, if any, need strengthening?
- Is the program effectively developing the capacity of counterparts and/or partners? If not, how could the design or implementation be altered to improve capacity strengthening?
- Is the program effectively enabling, or developing the capacity of, beneficiaries? If not, how could the design or implementation be altered to improve capacity strengthening?

Sustainability:

- Are the impacts (e.g., improvements in nutritional status and yields) sustainable?
- Are the outcomes related to adoption of better practices sustainable, i.e., participants are likely to continue after the project ends? Which outcomes are likely or unlikely to be sustainable, and why? What can be done to increase the sustainability?
- Is there a well developed exit strategy? If so, has the CS moved forward to initiate some aspects of that strategy?
- Will it be possible in the remaining years of the program to hand off responsibility to a local entity? If not, what additional efforts need to be undertaken?
- Has the program effectively collaborated with local administrative bodies such as ministries, local councils, etc? How does the DAP strengthen or expand the capacity of these entities, and will they be able to maintain this strengthened or expanded capacity once the DAP terminates?

Monitoring and Evaluation/Reporting:

- Has the program achieved its targets to date? If not, why not?
- Are established targets reasonable given the current program context? If not, how do they need to be modified?
- As defined and measured, do the performance indicators provide useful and reliable data on program progress and impacts?
- Are M&E data collected and reported regularly and in a timely fashion?
- Are M&E data and anecdotal information used for management purposes? Can M&E data and anecdotal information be better used for program management?
- Does the technical staff use M&E data and anecdotal information to conduct their work and assess progress? How can they use it more effectively?
- Are M&E data and anecdotal information shared with the communities or beneficiaries?
- Are M&E data and anecdotal information shared with the other organizations working in the area?
- Is the M&E staff well trained? What additional training is required? What immediate steps can the CS take to address the identified shortcomings?

Any of these questions can also be included under one or more of the technical sectors if the CS desires a sector specific response to the question.

Examples of technical sector evaluation questions

Agriculture:

- Have farmers adopted whole technological packages or just components and why?
- Are the technologies and practices being promoted well established and well suited to the local agroecological environments?
- Does the use of food for work for participation in agricultural production related activities act as an incentive/disincentive to improving productivity, and how?
- Is the input credit component designed and implemented according to standard best practices? If not, how can the credit component be improved?
- Are farmers able to obtain improved and recommended inputs without program assistance (free or subsidized inputs)? If not, what would be required in order that they could do so?
- Are farmer and other community groups able to maintain new productive infrastructure on their own? If not, why and what could be done to address this limitation?
- Do demonstration plots accurately reflect the real conditions facing farmers?
- Are DAP activities linked to the Ministry of Agriculture or the national or international agricultural research centers and has a communication protocol been established? Will these relationships extend beyond the life of the project?
- Is there a market for farmer produce?
- What are the greatest access opportunities – increasing the volume of sales, improving the quality of produce, building business acumen, etc.? Does the program take adequate advantage of these opportunities?

Infrastructure (rural roads and water and sanitation):

- Does the design and implementation of the infrastructure adhere to local technical codes and guidelines? If not, why not, and how can the DAP activities be brought up to code?
- Are there additional direct or indirect benefits derived from infrastructure construction or rehabilitation that are not currently being captured?
- Do food/cash for work activities compete with or complement the demands for household labor in other productive activities?
- Are there any unintended negative environmental impacts stemming from infrastructure activities? If so, are there sustainable mitigation measures being implemented? What additional measures can be implemented?
- Has the rehabilitation of rural roads had an effect on seasonal road use and transportation time and costs for the targeted beneficiaries? Has it had an effect on seasonal availability of food and other important commodities?
- Does the DAP include adequate complementary messages concerning water use and sanitation practices?

Microenterprise/microfinance:

- If microenterprises are supported or developed through community based organizations (CBO), which members receive training? Are there specific constraints to reaching some CBO members? How could the activity be broadened to more fully incorporate these CBO members?
- Are there certain groups within the target population better able to access loans, and why? If there are groups who are unable to access loans, should the program be broadened to include these groups and how can the program be modified to incorporate them?
- Is there an accessible market for the products or services produced by the microenterprises?
- Are these microenterprises likely to remain in operation after the DAP terminates? If not, why and what can be done to enhance their sustainability?
- Have microenterprise/microfinance activities contributed directly to household food security, and how? Are there ways to enhance the effect of income-generating activities on household food security?
- Are credit programs designed and implemented according to standard best practices? If not, why and how can credit practices be improved?
- What is the repayment rate for loans and what are the design elements contributing to this repayment rate? If the repayment rate is low, what can be done to improve it?

Health and Nutrition:

- Did the community participate in the design and implementation of the activity?
- Does the community receive information about the program and have an opportunity to comment back to the implementing agency?
- Are there clear linkages and coordination with public and private health and social services in the community?
- How successful has the activity been able to leverage government preventative and curative health, water and sanitation and related social services?
- To what extent do coordination committees ensure people's involvement in the program with due consideration of gender, age, ethnicity, and socio-economic status?
- Does the intervention reflect the problems facing the community?
- What has been the population coverage of the intervention and could it be improved?
- What is the use and success of the standard protocols for the prevention and management of childhood and maternal illness (such as IMCI, Immunization, CDD, MINPAK, STI/HIV/AIDS, MTCT, EOC, Child Spacing etc.)?
- How successful has the program been in protecting the nutrition/health status of specific groups (such as young children, mothers, pregnant women, the elderly, etc.)
- How well has the program been able to adapt to changing needs in the community?
- What is appropriate in terms of composition, quantity, use, handling and targeting of any take home or on-site ration for the MCHN program?
- Are staff able to advise on safe and appropriate uses of the ration including substitution with local commodities in the event of graduation or exit?
- Are there clearly written and applied guidelines for targeted feeding including appropriate breast and young child feeding?
- Are there appropriate and applied protocols for referral and treatment of severely malnourished children?
- Are staff demonstrating the ability to identify and respond to key micro-nutrient deficiencies through clinical and/or biochemical examinations?
- What is being done to improve the capabilities of the staff and local partners to respond to community needs and meet the objectives of the program?
- How effective has the exit or graduation strategy been?
- Are staff qualified and aware of the purpose and methods used in the program?
- Are staff responsible for nutrition and health assessments and care trained and supervised in the necessary techniques for children and mothers?
- Through what process were the health and nutrition behavior change and communication (BCC) materials developed, tested and applied?
- Are health and nutrition BCC materials appropriate – tailored to the user, actionable, accurate and linked to growth promotion messages (where growth monitoring is being implemented)? Which materials need strengthening, if any, and how?
- Are the program eligibility and graduation criteria appropriate given the objectives and assumptions of the program? If not, how should it be modified?
- What is the compliance of of the growth promotion sessions?
- What role if any is there for program "voluntary" health and nutrition promoters receiving incentives, monetary or other, from their communities to continue their work after the program is completed?
- Do the health and nutrition volunteers make home visits or do

² Include all acronyms, even those that are familiar to the field staff and local partners. Evaluation reports have a wide audience, including individuals who have limited experience of the specific country context.

any follow-up? If not, why not and what can be done to increase the likelihood that they do?

- Is there a health and nutrition volunteer attrition problem? If so, why do they drop out and what can be done to reduce the rate of attrition?
- Is there a functional referral and counter-referral system in place?

The language of the SOW should be as precise as possible.

Education:

- Are the program eligibility criteria appropriate given the objectives and assumptions of the DAP? If not, how should they be modified?
- Are the timing, composition and method of preparation of meals/snacks appropriate?
- Are take-home rations reaching the targeted households and individuals within the household?
- Do the take-home rations create social tensions within the community, and, if so, what can be done to reduce this tension?
- Are there ways to increase the food security impacts of the food for education program - incorporation of health and nutrition and environmental education, cultivation of a school garden, etc.?

The language of the SOW should be as precise as possible. For example, if the evaluation and recommendations address distinct agroecological zones, list what they are and request zone-specific findings and recommendations. If an emphasis of the program is to reduce labor constraints, ask the team to evaluate technologies promoted on the basis of labor savings and not just any and all benefits to participants. These sample questions were constructed with no particular DAP in mind and are specifically meant to be generic.

In contrast to the mid-term, the final evaluation SOW would likely contain more questions regarding the achievement of desired food security impacts. Mid-term evaluation questions tend to probe whether implementation is being carried out as planned and how implementation of the current DAP can be improved. Final evaluation questions query the team for recommendations on what interventions should be maintained, added to or removed from future DAP designs.

4. Description of deliverable

To ensure that the evaluation findings and recommendations are presented in a way that is useful for managers and other project implementers, the team should be provided with a clear description of the desired output. Since the output is usually a report, one method is to present an outline of the final report and include all the annexes. The following is an example of a basic outline:

Title page with date

Executive summary

Introduction

- Objective of SOW
- Brief description of project

Technical Sector I

- Brief description of interventions
- Implementation progress and achievement of results
 - Meeting targets
 - Other achievements
- Discussion of general evaluation questions
- Discussion of specific technical sector I SOW questions

Technical Sector II

- Brief description of interventions
 - Achievement of results
 - Meeting targets
 - Other achievements

- Discussion of generic evaluation questions
- Discussion of specific technical sector II SOW questions

Cross-cutting issues

- Brief description of cross-cutting issues
- Discussion of specific cross-cutting SOW questions

Summary

Recommendations

- Sector I recommendations
- Sector II recommendations
- Non-sector specific and cross-cutting recommendations

Annexes

- Evaluation SOW
- Composition of the team
- Methods
- List of sites visited
- List of key informants
- References
- Indicator performance tracking tables (IPTT)
- Survey tools (if a survey was implemented)
- List of acronyms ³

Other considerations for planning a successful evaluation

Preparation

- Start to plan the evaluation and write the SOW well in advance (e.g. three to four months) of the actual evaluation and allow time for input from technical and managerial staff.
- Plan the evaluation for when field staff are available to meet with the evaluation team and accompany them on site visits.
- Ensure that all relevant project documents are copied and distributed to all team members as soon as they arrive. If possible, some documents could be sent to the team members in advance of their travel so that they can review the materials before their arrival. Useful documents include:
 - DAP
 - DAP amendment
 - Results report
 - Baseline report
 - CSR4
 - Special studies
 - Organizational chart
 - Maps of sites and distribution of interventions
 - Training materials
 - Health and nutrition promotion material
 - Work plans
 - Quarterly/monthly growth monitoring summaries
 - Regional M&E reports
 - Quarterly project reports
 - Data summary tables
 - Informative trip reports or workshop output
- In the case of the final evaluation, the impact survey should be conducted and the data summarized **before** the team arrives in the field so that the results are available to the team. Conducting the survey requires time and frequently significant field staff involvement,

- making it logistically impractical to conduct both activities simultaneously.
- For these reasons, the SOW for the impact survey and data tabulation should be separate from the evaluation.
 - Allow several days in-country at the beginning of the evaluation for planning and document review.
 - Give the team members an opportunity to provide input into the selection of site visits and people to interview.
 - Allow the team members to suggest modifications to the SOW. Even when the technical field staff participate in the drafting of SOW, there normally are some questions that need clarification or that are overlooked. Technical team members can suggest revisions.

Logistics

- Make sure that the sites selected for evaluation team visits are representative of the target populations as well as the key program components or interventions. Consider splitting up the team to efficiently use the time available – the health/nutrition evaluator could visit health sites while agriculture evaluator visits farmers – but keep the team together for discussions and visits concerning program integration.
- Allow for adequate interview time. Most interviews last more than one hour and group discussions with beneficiaries can easily last two hours. Travel time should be factored in to the schedule even in the capital. Resist setting appointments every hour on the hour.
- Make sure that the team visits with collaborators and partners.
- Allow time for the team to meet with managerial and technical field staff so that they can gather information, share findings, and discuss potential recommendations to as well as how to operationalize recommendations.

- Provide opportunities for local staff to interact with the evaluators without their supervisors present.
- Allow time in the field for the team to meet and discuss the individual observations and findings.
- Avoid bringing senior management or donor representatives along on site visits. Their presence can alter the dynamics of interviews and even turn interview opportunities into presentations or ceremonies to express the beneficiaries' gratitude for the assistance received.

For further information:

Cogill, Bruce. *Anthropometric Indicators Guide*.

Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project, Academy for Educational Development, Washington, D.C. 2001.

Magnani, Robert. *Sampling Guide*. Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project, Academy for Educational Development, Washington, D.C. 1999.

Riely, Frank; Mock, Nancy; Cogill, Bruce. *Food Security Indicators and Framework for Use in the Monitoring and Evaluation of Food Aid Programs*. Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance Project, Academy for Educational Development, Washington, D.C. 1999.



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This publication was made possible through the support provided to the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) Project by the Office of Health and Nutrition of the Bureau for Global Health and the Office of Food for Peace of the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance at the U.S. Agency for International Development, under terms of Cooperative Agreement No. HRN-A-00-98-00046-00 awarded to the Academy for Educational Development (AED). The opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development

Recommended citation:
Bonnard, Patricia. Title II
Evaluation Scopes of Work.
Food and Nutrition Technical
Assistance Project, Academy
for Educational Development,
Washington, D.C. 2002